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ABSTRACT

This literature review of patterns of interpersonal communication in children of the Pacific Islands is based on the assumption that the communicative conventions in these children's homes are very different from those that they encounter in their Euro-American classrooms. Reviewed are studies of communicative interaction in children's peer relationships and with adults, and in teaching/learning situations which indicate how cultural patterns may conflict with some common classroom practices. It is suggested that while Pacific Islanders' teaching/learning patterns involve observation and imitation and teach operations that are related to the final goal, classroom instruction often involves teacher-centered verbal directions and presents tasks outside the context of overall performance goals. It is maintained that differences between Pacific Islanders' cultural norms and norms commonly represented in schools reduce the benefits that children may get from schooling. On the other hand, ways of avoiding classroom practices which engender cultural conflict and of selecting appropriate practices which are consistent with home-learned conventions are presented. The experience of the Kamehameha Educational Research Institute is described to demonstrate a program which has capitalized on Polynesian-Hawaiian children's existing skills to improve academic performance. (Author/MJL)

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PATTERNS OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION WITH PACIFIC ISLANDS CHILDREN: THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

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September, 1981

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PATTERNS OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION WITH PACIFIC ISLAND CHILDREN: THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

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INTRODUCTION

In this paper we take the perspective that it is important to view the eductional problems of many minority children within a bicultural bilingual framework (Cazden, Carrasco, Maldonado-Guzman, & Erickson, 1980; Jordan & Tharp, 1979). We will muster evidence to support the contention that the educational problems of bilingual children cannot be considered apart from cultural differences, which may or may not coincide with the use of a particular linguistic code. The "co-occurrence expectations" or "contextualization expectations" (Gumperz, 1977) of minority children may differ from those of mainstream, majority culture students, regardless of what language the children speak.

Schools impose many language demands on all children, requiring them to use and think about language in ways unlike those of many homes (e.g., Simons & Gumperz, note 1). We will be concerned with the area of communicative conventions. By this phrase we mean not only the conventions of speech, but all the verbal and non-verbal conventions of the interactions in which communication takes place in the classroom. Lack of understanding of the communicative conventions which apply in the classroom may be an important factor in the poor school achievement of many minority students. As Mehan (1979) points out, there are two aspects of successful performance in the classroom. A child must not only know the content of the correct answer, he/she must also know how to present that answer in a way that will be socially acceptable to the teacher. Following this line of logic, it seems reasonable to conclude that minority children, whatever their first language may be, often enter school with two strikes against them. Unlike majority culture children, they must not only learn academic content, but a new set of communicative conventions at the same time. Thus, studies of the conventions of communicative interaction may provide information relevant to the improvement of programs in bilingual education.

For many Pacific Islands populations, formal institutional education stemming from a Euro-Amerian tradition is not satisfactorily effective. This is true even in cases where home-school language differences, narrowly defined, do not exist. We will maintain that these difficulties arise because of the existence of differences in communicative conventions. For many Pacific Islands children, there are dramatic differences between the communicative conventions of their homes and those they encounter in their classrooms. This is so in spite of the fact that a wide variety of classroom practices are found in Pacific Islands schools, and practices vary among classrooms and between school systems. Classrooms in French Polynesia, for example, are quite different from the American schools of Hawaii. Having acknowledged this variety, however, it must also be acknowledged that, judging the results, selection and combinations of classroom practices suited to the needs of Pacific Island populations appear to occur relatively infrequently, and teachers and children throughout the Pacific often find themselves puzzled and frustrated by breakdowns of communication, and, thus, education. It also appears, as we shall illustrate in this paper, that for all the variation, both in classroom practice and in client population culture, there are at least some kinds of difficulty in communicative interaction which are widely distributed throughout the schools of the Pacific. While this fact might be seen as discouraging, it need not be so. If problems are similar, then may not similar remedies also apply?

We will present a selective review of studies conducted in Pacific Islands cultures. In the first section we will look at studies exploring ways of communicating and participating appropriately in face-to-face encounters in a number of Pacific cultures, especially in Polynesia. Then we will narrow our focus to look at research on teaching and learning, specifically on how communication and participation, especially in teaching and learning, are patterned in ways which may conflict with some common classroom practices. We will be interested in discovering if there are common stumbling blocks

encountered in different areas of the Pacific, and, if so, what these may be. We will focus on commonalities in communicative interaction conventions among the different cultures of the area as well as shared problems surrounding classroom encounters of Pacific Island children with Euro-American school systems, which problems may be seen to arise from the interaction of classroom conventions and home culture.

To anticipate our conclusions, we will find that some patterns of culture and some kinds of difficulties do recur. We will suggest, however, that it is possible to avoid classroom practices which engender many of these difficulties, and to select, from the range of good educational practice, appropriate practices which interact well with home-learned communicative conventions, thus producing normal academic achievement for groups of Pacific Islands children who ordinarily do not attain it. To witness this last assertion, we will draw upon the ten years of experience, in laboratory school and public school settings, of the Kamehameha Educational Research Institute (KERI) with Polynesian-Hawaiian children.

Our review will emphasize the results of studies with Hawaiian children: Among Pacific Islanders, it is with Hawaiians that there has been the greatest amount of research on educational problems stemming from cultural differences. The term "Hawaiian" is used here to designate people descended wholly or in part from the original Polynesian inhabitants of the Hawaiian Islands and who today participate in a modern Hawaiian subculture. There are presently about 54,000 school age children in the state of Hawaii who are of Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian ancestry. The future of these children is a matter of great concern because, as a group, Hawaiian adults are in a state of severe economic and social disadvantage (Thompson & Hannaha, note 2). Hawaiian children do not do well in the public schools. For example, according to Stanford Achievement Test results for 1978, 45% of Hawaiian students in grade four performed below average in reading,

compared to 23% nationally. At grade eight, 69% were performing below average (Thompson & Hannahs, note 2).

We think the case of Hawaiian students has special significance for educators working with populations of bilingual students. Most Hawaiian children grow up not as speakers of the Hawaiian language, but as native speakers of a nonstandard dialect of English, Hawaiian Creole English. However, because of the difficulties that these children have in school, it seems that we must deal with cultural differences which are present even in the absence of language differences, narrowly defined. Thus, in another area of Polynesia, the Society Islands, where the children grow up as speakers of Tahitian but attend schoos where the language of instruction is French, the same types of problems seem to occur, although perhaps further compounded by bilingualism (Levin, note 3).

Patterns of Communicative Interaction: Relationships with Peers and Adults

According to Gallimore, Boggs and Jordan (1974), we should not be surprised to find many instances of miscommunication between classroom teachers and Hawaiian students since the classroom is an interface between two different sets of values, those of the Hawaiian subculture and those manifested in the state-run school system. Based on five years of work in Hawaiian communities and in the schools attended by Hawaiian children, they list five areas of difficulty relevant to our discussion (pp. 262-264):

1. Hawaiian children are taught from a very young age to value highly their contributions to the smooth functioning of the family unit. In the family, and among peers as well, it is contributions to the group that are important; cooperation is valued and competition is frowned upon. In the classroom there is likely to be much more emphasis on individual achievement.

2. Within the family, and especially within the sibling group, there is what Gallimore, et al. call a "shared function" organization, which involves role flexibility and joint responsibility for family tasks and obligations. Hawaiian children are used to performing tasks important to the family as part of a work force of siblings. These tasks may include taking care of younger siblings, doing the family laundy, cooking, yard work or any of the other tasks necessary to make a large household run successfully. The sibling group organizes and divides its work, and a young person has a degree of freedom to arrange his/her work responsibilities and schedule in coordination with siblings, and to accommodate to changing circumstances. In the schools that Hawaiian children attend, teachers usually insist on individual task performance, and students generally are allowed little initiative or flexibility to determine their work responsibilities or schedules.

3. At home, adult supervision of children's task performance, and of the activities of post-toddler children in general, is non-intrusive and indirect, often mediated through older siblings. One of the major components of the family organization is "sibling caretaking," where the older children tend to many of the needs of their younger sisters and brothers. The lack of adult intervention in routine matters results in feelings of competence and autonomy on the part of the children. In school, by contrast, teachers often closely monitor every part of children's activity. At home the child is made to feel that s/he is an important member of the family; indeed, s/he makes major contributions to the life of the family. On the other hand, while in school s/he is forced to revert to the status of a "small child" who must be closely supervised by an adult. To a Hawaiian child, even at age six or seven, this degree of supervision may seem inappropriately intrusive and may be interpreted as a sign that the teacher thinks him/her incompetent.

4. Hawaiian children, as part of the pattern of sibling caretaking, are taught to turn to older children for help with everday needs, and not to make demands on adults in routine matters. Children learn to negotiate with each other to solve everyday problems, obviating the need to confront adults. When adults are displeased, Hawaiian children are taught that the appropriate and respectful behavior is not to try to explain or negotiate with the offended adult, but to listen quietly to what the adult has to say and then withdraw from the scene. Adults, on their side, are expected not to draw out an unpleasant confrontation to great length (this constitutes "picking" on the child), but to have their say and then leave the child alone. The tendency of many teachers to try to draw Hawaiian students into negotiations and

explanations when difficulties arise conflicts with the view of the children that negotiation ("talking back") with authority figures signals lack of respect. Confusion results because the teacher seems to be adopting an ambiguous role, switching between that of adult and that of peer.

5. The fifth point of possible conflict is that as a consequence of the sibling caretaking system, children learn to depend on and learn from siblings, and, in turn, to care for and provide help and information to children younger or less competent than themselves. They develop a strong tendency to attend to and orient towards peers, and correspondingly, a lower tendency to automatically attend to and orient towards adults. Their teachers, on the other hand, generally expect Hawaiian students to attend to them in preference to attending to classmates, and may regard peer interaction as disruptive and peer helping as cheating.

Each of these dimensions of potential conflict can be seen to result because some values, norms and patterns of behavior in Hawaiian culture differ from those frequently encountered by Hawaiian children in the classroom. Yet it is possible to shape classroom settings to build upon, rather than conflict with, the background of Hawaiian children. For example, frequently expressed teacher complaints about Hawaiian children are that they are irresponsible and lazy and that they do not know how to work cooperatively. This characterization contrasts dramatically with observations of Hawaiian children at home and in peer interaction contexts in school. As we have noted, at home they typically have important work obligations which are carried out responsibly with little adult supervision and with self-regulated orchestration of cooperative effort among siblings. In school, when left to their own devices, the preferred work mode is cooperation, and children exhibit concern for the good performance of other children, as well as their own.

In response to these data on cultural features, one first-grade teacher, Lynn Baird Vogt, working as part of the KERI effort, set out to produce a school context that would elicit these same behaviors in her classroom. What happened is documented in a film (Tharp, Jordan,

Baird & Loganbill, note 4) and in two papers (Tharp, Jordan, Baird, & Loganbill, note 5; Jordan, Tharp, and Baird-Vogt, note 6). The classroom situation with which she worked was the complex task of setting up 12 learning centers in her classroom each morning and then taking down and storing all the center materials at the end of the morning (after which another teacher took over the classroom). A favored Hawaiian teaching strategy, used both by adults and siblings in the home, and by peers in school, is modeling. So Baird began by physically modeling the necessary actions and verbally modeling ("talking to herself") her decisions as she made them. She did not give directions or assign tasks or ask children to help, but allowed the children to act on their own initiative. Within a matter of days the children spontaneously took over virtually all of the set-up and clean-up activities, and within a few weeks, some could interpret her complex and cryptic lesson plans to guide their actions. They worked cooperatively and independently without seeking individual praise or recognition; they operated in a "shared function" mode, switching roles and tasks to fit day-to-day changes in needs and interest; they monitored each other's capabilities for tasks and subtly directed less competent children to activities for which they had the capacity; they even recognized the need for tasks not modeled by the teacher (cleaning up spilled paint) and found the means to get them done (a mop the teacher did not know existed). In response to the creation of a context to which they knew how to respond (tasks to be done for the benefit of the group; skills modeled; indirect adult supervision; freedom to work out the details of their own work performance; a cooperative group work situation), the children exhibited in school the responsibility, initiative, diligence and cooperation they customarily exhibit at home.

This same system has since proven successful in other KERI-run first, second, and third grade classrooms with Hawaiian students. Teachers have used different means to get the system started. One teacher "forgot" parts of the morning set-up; another modeled

extensively and assigned tasks; and a third asked for the children's help because she was "really busy." The outcomes have been uniformely good. For example, in a third grade classroom several of the children who were not outstanding academically were very competent in the set-up activities and, therefore, had a chance to make recognized contributions to the class routine. They simultaneously seemed to gain confidence in other areas; and by demonstrating their competence in setting up centers, they also gained status in the eyes of their peers. In several rooms the students started to take obvious pride in the appearance of the room and cleaned up messes without any prompting from the teacher. Children who previously were barred from the classrooms until school was ready to start now came early and set-up the centers; and in one classroom when a teacher was late one day, all the centers were set-up according to her lesson plans before she arrived (Joesting, note 7). Observations like these demonstrate that the children took their responsibilities seriously and responded positively in a number of ways. The children were offered familiar avenues to become contributing members in their classrooms, as they already were in their families. As a result, all teachers reported improved teacher-student rapport and wide-ranging increases in cooperation.

We have been concentrating on the Hawaiian situation because an unusually well-documented picture exists of the interactions between the culture of Hawaiian children and the schools. Throughout Polynesia, however, the patterns of family life and communicative interaction, as well as many of the problems arising in school, appear to be similar. Ted and Nancy Graves (note 8) have examined the working modes preferred by the children in European, mixed, and Polynesian classrooms. They observed that Polynesian children like to work in integrated, cooperating groups, a style they call "inclusive," similar to what has been described for Hawaiian children. This contrasts with the performance of European children to exclude others in favor of individual task accomplishment and achievement. The inclusive style

may also conflict with the expectations of Euro-American-trained teachers.

Levy (1969), in his discussion of Tahitian family structure, notes patterns similar to those in Hawaiian families. Children are primary caretakers of their younger siblings. Therefore, children are more peer than adult oriented. Children's roles are not set; they are managers of the behavior of younger ones, even as their behavior is monitored by others higher in the group. A child's role shifts as the need arises; if the mother or an older sibling is absent for awhile, another sibling steps in. Adults generally interfere with their children's caretaking only when there is a major problem.

As with Hawaiian children, Tahitian children are likely to find the conditions in their classrooms, run on the French model, difficult to understand. The teacher-focused oriented characteristic of their schools is foreign to these children. Also, in the classroom the children are regarded only as learners and not as potential teachers, and being fixed in this one role may be difficult for children accustomed to assuming a multiplicity of roles that shift with the circumstances.

The work of Ochs (note 9) with Samoan children also reveals similarities to the Hawaiian pattern. Ochs emphasizes the importance of status in traditional Samoan communities, and of two characteristics shown in the behavior of persons of relatively high standing. The first of these characteristics is low activity, and the second, minimal display of interest in the activities of those around one. In settings where care is being provided to young children, these two characteristics of high status play a significant role. A lower ranking person is expected to take the more active role in childcare, while less active care is provided by the higher ranking. For example, a mother who observes that a young child is in need of attention is not likely to take any action herself if one of the child's older sisters

is also present. Ochs suggests that these values are carried over into verbal interactions between parents and children. For instance, if a small child issues a complaint, the parent is not likely to respond to the child directly. Rather, he or she may either ignore the complaint or direct one of the child's older siblings to make an appropriate reply.

Jane and James Ritchie (1979), in their overview of socialization in Polynesia, have noted themes of multiple caretaking (including sibling caretaking), peer orientation, and affiliation motivation, along with a high value placed on cooperation and working for the good of the group, and on respect for adult authority. These patterns are apparently widely, almost universally, distributed throughout Polynesia. Consequently, it is perhaps not surprising to find that similar problems in United States or European-style school systems are also widely distributed.

One interesting exception to this common pattern is Rotuma (Howard, 1970), a small island located geographically in Melanesia, but with inhabitants of Polynesian ancestry and culture. Rotuman families do not use sibling caretaking to nearly as great a degree as is the Polynesian norm. Consequently, Rotuman children are more apt to orient strongly towards adults than is usually the case. Perhaps because of these factors, in combination with the relatively small population of the island, which tends to make schooling more personalized and attuned to the values of the community, Howard's judgment is that Rotuman schools are fairly well adapted to the values and behavior patterns of their students and are, on the whole, successful in educating them. This is especially interesting since Rotuman children speak little English prior to entering school and must learn it in the first two years, since English becomes the language of instruction beginning in third grade.

Patterns of Communicative Interaction: Participation in Speech Events

Stephen Boggs and Karen Watson-Gegeo have studied the cultural patterning of communication, again with Hawaiian children, but from a perspective somewhat different from that of Gallimore, Boggs and Jordan. Both have been interested in investigating the kinds of speech routines in which Hawaiian children engated outside of the classroom. This research was, in part, triggered by Boggs' observations in classrooms with Hawaiian students (1972). He noticed that there were many disjunctures in teacher-pupil interaction, which seemed to be disconcerting to teacher and student alike. For example, when the teacher asked a question, a large number of children generally raised their hands to be chosen. But before the teacher was able to nominate one of them, a number of children would call out the answer. When a child was finally nominated to recite, he often provided only a minimal response. Sometimes a child who had eagerly sought a turn would become silent when called upon by the teacher. On the basis of these observations, Boggs concluded that the children's speech was likely to be inhibited in those situations where the adult was perceived to be "putting the child on the spot." When the children were allowed to relate to the adult as a group, however, instead of feeling singled out to recite, they tended to speak much more freely.

The communicational disjunctures seen by Boggs in these classrooms apparently stem from the children's home experiences. Boggs (note 10) identified six different kinds of home speech events involving Hawaiian children five years and younger, and adults. These events can be thought to fall into two broad categories: (a) Those in which parents and other adult family members entertained small children with verbal play, and (b) those which occurred when the parent was upset, trying to deal with a problem situation, or punishing the child. The significance of these two different types of events, according to Boggs, is that the first leads Hawaiian children to prefer spontaneity and fun in speech events, while the second tends to make them extremely

sensitive to cues that the adult is seeking a particular response.

These findings imply that Hawaiian children can be expected to react negatively to teaching situations in which a single child must answer a direct question. Such situations, comparatively neutral to U.S. majority culture children, may be perceived as punitive by Hawaiian children, to whom the circumstance of an adult directly and closely questioning an individual child is often a cue that the adult is displeased. The child, compelled to answer a teacher's question on his/her own, may also feel threatened simply because, as we have seen, he/she is unaccustomed to interacting on a one-to-one basis with adults. The classroom recitation situation is an unfamiliar one for Hawaiian children because they are used to interacting with adults as members of a group (Jordan, note 11; Jordan & Tharp, 1979).

Colletta (1980), in his study of education and culure change in Ponape, reports for this Micronesian population a very similar reluctance to respond to direct questions in the classroom. In the Ponapean case, this stems from a cultural stricture against verbalizing knowledge as a kind of showing-off, a behavior especially inappropriate in children. The reaction of a child to a direct question often is to bow his/her head and slide down in his/her chair, a source of much frustration to teachers in Ponape's American-run school system. This behavior would be very familiar to teachers of Hawaiian children. Both populations of children interpret direct questioning by adults as something quite different from what their teachers intend.

Levin (note 12; note 13) has examined teacher-student interaction in the schools of Tubuai, in French Polynesia, focusing especially on the teacher-perceived problem of the non-responsiveness of students to teacher questions. She reports that children are reluctant to volunteer individual answers to teacher queries, and if called on, answer either not at all or only with reluctance and obvious discomfort after much coaching and prodding by fellow students and the teacher.

Students who respond and are incorrect are teased by their classmates. Levin characterizes the situation in one classroom as follows:

> The rural Polynesian students . . . held different beliefs from their European teacher about proper behavior in public. . . . When speaking in public, at a political meeting or in a church, for example, a Polynesian is given a culturally sanctioned period of time to hold the floor in silence, in order to feruri, "to sort out thoughts." It is socially irresponsible to speak one's mind before these thoughts are well formulated. Attracting attention to oneself in public is negatively valued. Thus, in the classroom, volunteering to answer a question when no other hands are raised is perceived by other students as showing off. In addition, if a Polynesian makes a mistake after attracting the attention of others, then s/he is especially subject to group ridicule (note 12).

However, in another classroom with a Polynesian teacher:

> Class B's teacher respected the student's ha'ama--their sensitivity to embarrassment. If no one volunteered to answer she did not call on a student by name. She accepted answers that were anonymously shouted from the class, labeling one answer as correct, thus rewarding that student in a non-threatening manner (note 12).

In the latter classroom, where the children's communicative interaction style was more sensitively handled, participation in classroom speech events was much higher. These children also showed higher academic achievement levels, suggesting that interacting in a familiar style facilitated learning.

Returning to the Hawaiian case, another kind of nonschool speech event important to Hawaiian children is talk-story (Watson, 1975; Watson-Gegeo & Boggs, 1977), an event which takes the form of a contrapuntual conversation. In talk-story, performance in collaboration with others is more highly valued than individual performance. The audience is likely to be more favorably impressed by a speaker successful in drawing others into the conversation or story-telling, than by one who keeps the floor to him/herself. The major difference between talk-story and classroom speech events, such as those described by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) and Mehan (1979),

is that the former is characterized by a high proportion of turns involving joint performance, or the cooperative production of responses by two or more children, while the latter emphasize individual recitation.

Au & Jordan (1981) hypothesized that a reading program with a high rate of success for educationally at-risk (low SES, urban) Hawaiian children was successful partly because of similarities between the talk-story interaction style and the interaction style employed in the teacher-led, small group reading lesson which forms one part of the program. Au (1980a) studied the participation structures, or patterns of interaction, in one of these lessons. The sample lesson studied did not show the minimal responding to teacher questions observed by Boggs (1972), apparently because the teacher allowed the children to discuss the basal reader story in participation structures which followed rules similar to those in talk-story. Nine different participation structures were identified, and these basically seemed to fall into two groups: Those found in conventional classroom lessons, and those based on joint performance by different combinations of children, which resembled Hawaiian talk-story. The participation structures in the lesson were accommodated to the children's preference for speaking in turns involving joint, rather than individual, performance.

In a second study, Au & Mason (1981) explored the possibility that Hawaiian children participating in talk-story-like reading lessons would show more achievement-related behaviors than when participating in lessons structured according to mainstream patterns of classroom interaction. The same six Hawaiian students participated in reading lessons taught by a teacher trained in the successful reading program, and a teacher who had the same amount of teaching experience but had not been trained in the program nor worked with young Hawaiian students before. The results showed that the children were much more attentive in the reading lesson given by the first teacher, discussed many more ideas from the basal reader story, and in general received much more

practice in reading skills. The lessons taught by the second teacher incorporated many exchanges unrelated to learning to read, with the teacher and children taking much time to negotiate the interactional rules. The teacher tried to insist that the children raise their hands and wait to be nominated one at a time before responding. The children, on the other hand, wanted to be able to call out the answers and help other children phrase responses to the teacher's questions. These behaviors, forbidden by the second teacher, were permitted and even encouraged by the first teacher, who conducted much of her lesson according to talk-story-like structures. On the basis of these results, it appears that Hawaiian children will not only be more comfortable but will also learn academic skills more quickly if allowed to participate in lessons which incorporate patterns of participation structures similar to those in important nonschool speech events.

Studies of Hawaiian, Tahitian and Samoan children all suggest that they are likely to be relatively unaccustomed to interacting with adults on a one-to-one basis, because they are often in situations where direct communication is with other children and not adults. Work by Boggs, with Hawaiian children; Levy, on Tahitian family structure; Levin, with Tubuai children; and Colletta, in Ponapean schools, further implies that the circumstances of an adult directly questioning or challenging a child may be interpreted as a cue that the adult is displeased or opening the child up to ridicule. Taken together, the results show that these children can be expected to react negatively to classroom patterns in which the teacher directs a question to a particular, named child. Although the teacher's intent may be to instruct, the child is likely to interpret the teacher's behavior as a sign that the adult is unhappy with him/her or trying to embarrass him/her. However, a different style of interaction can have happier results.

Further information on these issues, with other populations of Pacific Islands children, should be forthcoming. Watson-Gegeo (note 14) reports plans to continue research with Kwara'ae children in the Solomon Islands to determine how they develop communicative competence, and in particular to identify the types of verbal routines in which they engage. The children will be observed both in the village and in school to find out whether, and in what way, expectations for interaction differ in the two settings. This study should be of considerable interest because Kwara'ae children have no knowledge of English prior to attending school, although the language of instruction is English. Furthermore, the children's teachers do not share their cultural background.

Malcolm (note 15), has begun work on the communicative acts of Western Australian Aboriginal children and the patterns of communication between these children who speak a variety of first languages, and their non-Aboriginal, English speaking teachers. He has tentatively identified a series of communicative acts which characterize the children's interactions with teachers. These acts include:

- Proxy Eliciting, where a child attempts to elicit a response from a teacher by working through another child;
- Empty Bidding, where a child volunteers to answer a teacher question but does not speak when acknowledged;
- Deferred Replying, where a child pauses for some time before giving a response;
- Declined Replying, where a child does not respond to an eliciting act on the part of the teacher;
- Shadowed Replying, in which a child does not respond until he/she can do so in the "shadow" of the next speaker; and
- Unsolicited Replying, in which a child volunteers a response without having been nominated by the teacher.

Malcolm suggests that what is taking place in the classroom is a renegotiation of the terms of communication, and that the task of the teacher must be to ensure that the Aboriginal child will remain in participation in speech events rather than withdrawing into silence because the teacher insists on only one pattern of participation, one which the child does not know how to manage.

Teaching/Learning Interactions

In this section we will focus on the patterning of teaching/learning interactions in Pacific Islands groups. With Hawaiian children, and with children from other Pacific cultures, researchers have stressed the importance of sibling caretaking. Hawaiian youngsters by the age of two or three are generally in the care of older siblings and they soon learn to turn to older siblings and peers for many of their wants (Gallimore, Boggs, & Jordan, 1974). As a consequence, the company of other children is likely to be very highly valued by the Hawaiian child. Hawaiian adults, for their part, support the formation of sibling groups, because the sibling group, as a work and child care force, is an integral part of the organization of many Hawaiian families (Jordan, note 1). As we have seen, this sibling group assumes much of the responsibility for smooth running of the household. As part of the working and care-giving group of sibilings, Hawaiian children engage in many teaching/learning interactions involving siblings, rather than adults. It is not surprising that they quite naturally turn to siblings and peers when in need of help, even if adults are present.

In the classroom setting, this tendency can produce problems for teachers and children alike. If the teacher expects the children to regard him/her as the primary source of help, the children will not fulfill these expectations, as they have been raised in a sytem where help in routine matters is generally sought from other children--especially when it is clear that the adult is busy, as is so

often the case with teachers. When faced with difficulties in the classroom, Hawaiian children turn to one another in lieu of seeking help from the teacher, a behavior which the teacher may first find puzzling and then annoying.

In her analysis of videotapes of a sample of seven Hawaiian kindergarten students in their normal activities in the classroom, Jordan (note 11) found that the children engaged in peer interactions roughly 50% of the time. Of these peer interactions about 10% were teaching/learning interactions. In another study (Jordan, note 11), however, of groups of kindergarten children in classroom settings which were specifically task-oriented, a child was involved in an average of one teaching/learning interaction every three minutes. About half of these interactions had academic content. Comparable observations in a first grade classroom indicated that there was a slightly higher rate of teaching/learning interactions, roughly one per child every two and a half minutes. For these older children, 75% of the interactions were academic. Jordan hypothesized that this increase in the rate of teaching/learning interactions, particularly academic ones, occurred because the children tended to increasingly mobilize a familiar strategy--turning to other children for help--as the school's demands for academic learning and performance became greater.

Gallimore, Tharp, & Speidel (1973) conducted an experiment to determine whether Hawaiian students who came from homes where there was sibling caretaking would be more attentive to a teacher-appointed peer tutor than students from homes where sibling caretaking was not present. The task was one of learning to identify letters and words. They found that boys whose families involved male siblings in caretaking (less usual than female sibcare) paid more attention to peer tutors (all were female) and also showed more general attentiveness in the classroom. These same relationships did not hold for girls, i.e., their attentiveness to peer tutors was not correlated with female sibcare. Gallimore et al. concluded:

> Families who assign major childcare tasks to boys apparently foster behaviors that generalize to the classroom. The transfer may not be specific from sibling interaction experiences to (teacher-organized) peer tutoring situations since family reliance on sibcare also correlated with generalized classroom attentiveness, and general (non-sibcare) chore demands (p. 267).

These results suggest the possibility of positive transfer to the classroom of habits developed in the home.

Taken together these findings have important implications for the selection and development of more effective teaching strategies for Hawaiian children. For one thing, it seems that the teacher should not place him/herself in the role of sole source of information and help. Rather, s/he should allow the children the opportunity to teach and learn from each other. Such a system is presently being used in classrooms using the KERI-developed Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP), where Hawaiian students are achieving at or above national norms in reading. KEEP classrooms are organized into learning centers where the children interact with one another while working on academic tasks. An added advantage of this system is that the teacher is able to use all of the available time to teach the academic skills which the children are not able to learn initially from one another. For example, in the KEEP reading program the teacher spends much of the time working with small, homogeneous groups on reading comprehension. Children not in the teacher-led group work at learning centers with other children and practice reading related tasks. These children's behavior is only indirectly monitored by the teacher, and the message the children receive is that s/he regards them as competent members of the class. At the same time, the children have a context for working and learning which shares many features with culturally familiar contexts. Jordan (1981b p. 17) has pointed out:

> . . . This group setting (of learning centers) is congruent with the importance of peers and siblings outside of school, as it allows children the company of other children in adult-approved circumstances. More specifically, the group of children at a learning center is congruent with familiar sibling and companion group contexts for working. Although the teacher is present, she ordinarily does not intrude upon the working group of children. Consequently, as at home, other children are the most readily available sources of help or information. Also, since for any individual child at a center, there is usually at least one other child present who is currently doing or has already done the same work, the potential for cooperative work is present, and a good deal of cooperation and helping does take place. . . .
>
> Considered as a context for learning, because centers allow and encourage peer interaction and cooperative work, the children are able to mobilize strategies for teaching and learning acquired at home. Some examples of such strategies are: seeking and giving immediate feedback about small segments of performance; scanning for and utilizing multiple sources of help and information; scanning for evidence that other children need help; volunteering help to others; switching between "teacher" and "learner" roles; joint work; and the use of modeling and intervention as major teaching devices.
>
> Of course, peer groups at centers are not identical in their make-up or social organization to sibling or companion groups. For example, the latter are usually composed of children covering a range of ages, while the children in a classroom are very close in age. However, . . . the two contexts are congruent at certain points, and these similarities allow the children to be at ease in the centers setting, encourage them to work on school tasks, and enable them to use familiar social interactional strategies for teaching and learning. (See Jordan, note 16; note 17; Jordan and Tharp, note 18; for further discussion.)

In this way the children's background experiences in teaching and learning from other children are used to further their academic achievement, and effective use is made of the teacher's time.

In addition to building upon the children's strengths by allowing them to teach and learn from peers, another component of the KEEP program is designed to elicit from the children increased attention to the direct instruction provided by the adult teacher (Tharp, note 19; Jordan & Tharp, 1979). When the children enter kindergarten it is

necessary for the teacher to establish him/herself in a role of high social relevance--a status which is not automatically accorded to all adults by Hawaiian children. This relationship is initiated by high doses of physical and emotional warmth--hugs, smiles, and praise from the teacher--reminiscent of the relationship between Hawaiian babies and adults. Then, praise and encouragement is linked to good work or helpful school behavior, helping to teach the children the behaviors appropriate to their new role of "student," and establishing the teacher as an adult who controls and dispenses desirable resources to children who behave appropriately. Gradually, the children orient increasingly to the teacher and actively seek to win his/her approval. The teacher is then able to gain the children's attention and eager participation in teacher-led lessons. Note that this is not an either-or situation, in which peer or adult orientation becomes the exclusive means for learning. Rather, the children's academic achievement is promoted through a combination of the two; on the one hand the program capitalizes upon patterns learned in the home, while on the other it extends attending habits to new people and contexts in ways which should prove useful if the children are to derive the full benefits of schooling (Jordan, 1981; 142-144).

A study of maternal teaching modes with four- to five-year-old children (Jordan, note 20) compared a group of Hawaiian mothers to Caucasian mothers from the United States mainland. Mother-child pairs were asked to work on four different tasks or "games" and their interactions were videotaped. The variables of interest were the amount of use by the mothers of non-participatory verbal direction of their child's activity, as opposed to demonstration and participation (with or without accompanying verbalization). The results of the study indicated that the Hawaiian mothers used verbal directing techniques in interacting with their children to a significantly lesser extent than did the comparison group of mid-Western, middle-class mothers of a school-successful population of children, although the overall interaction rate was the same for both groups. Among the Hawaiian

mothers, those who used relatively more of the verbal direction techniques had children who, by the end of first grade, were doing better in school than children whose mothers used these strategies less frequently. Jordan suggests that, in the two comparisons, between groups and within the Hawaiian group, the children of mothers who did more verbal directions adapted more successfully to school because their mother's teaching strategies resembled methods frequently used by school teachers. She hypothesizes that, as a consequence of this prior experience, the more successful children found verbal directing behaviors of school teachers more familiar and more congruent with their own learning strategies.

Joesting (note 21) closely examined differences in mother-child interaction during one task on two of the videotapes from the Jordan (note 20) study, one of a low SES hawaiian girl and her mother and one of a middle-class Caucasian boy and his mother. While the Caucasian mother directed her child's performance in the assigned task (putting together a three-dimensional puzzle), the Hawaiian mother and child worked together to complete the task, without the mother attempting to govern every step in the activity. The Hawaiian pair formed a team to complete the puzzle as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Jordan (1981a, Chapter 7; 1981b) has emphasized the importance to Hawaiian children of mutual participation in learning situations. Hawaiian children are accustomed to learning in settings where the knowledgeable person and the less knowledgeable person work together in carrying out the task. In a classroom setting, this is less likely to be the case. Often, teachers only direct students in tasks and do not participate as part of the working group. This kind of teacher behavior is comparable to that of the Caucasian mother observed by Joesting. The behavior of the Hawaiian mother, on the other hand, showed a sense of mutual participation as she worked in partnership with her child to complete the assigned task.

Jordan (1981a, Chapter 7; 1981b) has also noted that for Hawaiian children at home, learning takes place through imitation of models and in a mode of enterprise engagement, in which the learning situation involves actually engaging in the task or skill to be learned, rather than talking about how to perform the task. Furthermore, learning occurs in the presence of the whole task, rather than only some small part of it not clearly related to ultimate performance goals. For example, at home, children learn how to take care of infants by participating in the family enterprise of caring for a baby, gradually taking on larger components of the entire task, but continuously having before them the model of baby care being completely and competently done.

These Hawaiian data fit with anthropological findings in other Pacific Islands cultures. For example, similar observations were made by Levy (1973) in Tahiti, and Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo (note 22) have made comparable observations in Kwara'ae culture. With all of these groups it is common for children to begin to learn skills, whether they be in the preparation of food or the building of shelter, by immediately participating in a limited way in their performance. Gradually, the child assumes more and more responsibility for different aspects of the task until s/he is able to carry the whole process out independently. If, as a child is attempting to perform part of a task, s/he makes a mistake, a more skilled person intervenes to correct her/his performance (Pukui, Haertig & Lee, 1972). This kind of error-cued teaching is also found in classrooms among Hawaiian peers (Jordan, notes 16 and 17), and interestingly enough, a variety of it is exhibited by Australian Aborigine males teaching their sons a traditional task (Davidson, note 23).

It is also frequently the case that Polynesian children watch while an adult models or demonstrates the correct way of performing a task. Jordan has observed this for Hawaiian children, both at home and with peers in school (1981a). MacDonald (1979), in her book on the

leis of Hawaii, notes that traditionally children were not supposed to ask questions, but were just supposed to observe while their elders made the leis. Howard (1970, p. 116) notes that the entire socialization system in Rotuma is geared to making a child sensitive to models, and that the primary technique used in education is personal demonstration. Children are subtly encouraged to imitate appropriate models for various skills and may be physically guided in a difficult manipulation of movement, but explicit verbal instruction is rare. If, in a rare case, a child asks for explanation, it is likely he will be told to go watch a skilled adult.

We have observed with Hawaiian children that teaching and learning are often embedded in the routine performance of necessary tasks. Events which are designed solely for the purpose of teaching children are relatively rare. Rather, teaching is generally part and parcel of the complete execution of skills and tasks, and the child's learning proceeds within this framework. In mainstream Anglo-American culture there are adult-directed speech events designed largely or solely to instruct the young. In Hawaiian culture, on the other hand, these kinds of events occur less often, perhaps so seldom that young children entering school do not know how to respond to them. In the absence of a task completion framework, the children may not understand what the teacher is trying to accomplish. For example, it is common for teachers to ask questions to which the teacher knows the answers. Mainstream U.S. children who have had some experience of this kind of interaction with other adults learn to reply readily, accepting their role in rhetorical question-and-answer instructional sequences. Hawaiian children probably will not have had practice in this role, and may find it bewildering and threatening.

Ponapean children, whose general socialization experience, as described by Colletta (1980), is similar to that of Hawaiian children, also share a similar learning experience:

> During this period, too, the fundamental rule of all Ponapean education is laid down: All learning and teaching transpire in real life situations. There is no sharp cleavage between the life space of the child, his physical environment, and the adult world. . . . All take active part in family life, religious rites, and economic processes. The child observes and participates when ready. Readiness is intrinsically determined by the individual and is encouraged with expectations of success from significant others, both adults and peers. Identification with an mimicry of adult roles are learning processes sanctioned and guided by the group in the context of daily living.
>
> Knowledge is sought where it is thought to be meaningful and useful to one's survival. Moments of instruction are not segregated from moments of action. Learning occurs through self initiated activity in which individuals are in total sensory involvement with their environment. Ponapean indigenous education is not just a listening process where the burden rests on the teacher, but is a fully educational experience, deeply rooted in the experiences of childhood, with the learner actively seeking what he needs to know. The securing and developing of the keen perceptive powers which enable the Ponapean child to make astute observations, synthesize them, and apply what he/she has seen are firmly grounded in Ponapean cosmology (pp. 25-26).

Firth (1957), in his classic study of the Tikopia, has remarked on a similar kind of contrast with respect to that group of Polynesians and to non-Europeans more generally:

> The cardinal points of education in a native society such as the Tikopia are its continuity in both a temporal and a social sense, its position as an activity of kinsfold, its practicality--not in the sense of being directed to economic ends but as arising from actual situations in daily life--and its non-disciplinary character. A certain subordination to authority is required . . . but the individual is a fairly free agent to come and go as he likes, to refuse to heed what is being taught him. All this is in direct contrast to a system of education . . . under European tutelage. Such consists usually of periodic instruction with segregation . . . imparted by strangers. . . . This instruction is given not in connection with practical situations of life as they occur, but in accord with general principles, the utility of which is only vaguely perceived by the pupils. . . . The divorce from reality of . . . life, the staccato rhythm of instruction and the alien methods of restraint undoubtedly are potent factors in retarding the achievement of the aims of so much of what is rather falsely termed "native education" (in Tikopia). . . . Formal lessons are rarely given . . . but advice explanation and commands

> tend to cluster around the performance of any activity, or the onset of any social situation (pp. 134 & 135).

By our emphasis on the importance of participation, observation, and imitation as learning devices and the relative lack of importance of verbal directing devices, we do not mean to give the impression that verbal competence is not valued in Polynesia or other Pacific Islands areas. Highly developed and specialized verbal productions are markers of rank and status, as with Samoan "talking chiefs" (Mead, 1961). However, the appropriate and routine uses of languages may differ from one culture to another; for example, we have seen that it may be common for adults to ask children many questions and give them a large number of verbal instructions in one culture, but not in another. What constitutes verbal competence, then, may differ from culture to culture. Furthermore, the means by which children develop verbal competence may be quite different. This point is brought out in the work of Ochs in Samoan and Schieffelin with Kaluli children in Papua, New Guinea.

Ochs (note 9) addressed herself to the question of why expansions were absent in the speech of Samoan parents. In middle-class American families, it has been observed that expansions, extensions and/or interpretations of a young child's utterance, are an important means of developing the child's communicative competence (e.g., Bruner, 1976; Snow, note 24). In Samoan families, in contrast, it appeared that requests for the child to repeat the older person's statement, or to produce a particular response, were more common means of developing the child's verbal abilities. Underlying the use of expansion, Ochs suggests, is the view that it is appropriate for a care-giver to attempt to interpret what a young child has said and to focus on the child's intentions. In traditional Samoan culture these assumptions are not made, and the use of imitation as a means of developing social competence in children stems from a different view of the social status of child and care-giver. Because the care-giver is of higher status

than the child, s/he is not expected to take the child's perspective; rather it is the child who is expected to refocus him/herself on the actions of others. Also, because children are believed not to be completely in control of their own behaviors, intentionality is of little concern.

We can see how Samoan children, accustomed to dealing with care-givers in situations where their communicative competence is improved through elicited imitation, might have difficulty adjusting in classroom situations where the teacher relied largely on expansion to develop this same type of competence. It is difficult to say exactly how a teacher's efforts at expansion would be interpreted by the children, but Ochs' results suggest at the least that the children would be uncertain about how to respond in such situations. Certainly they would view the teacher's behavior as inconsistent with her/his much higher status.

Schieffelin (1979) studied interaction between pairs of mothers and two-year old children in New Guinea. She was interested in discovering how Kaluli children were taught to speak appropriately. She found that many interactions centered on the use of ɛlema. In requesting that a listener repeat the speaker's words, a Kaluli speaker will say the message, adding the word ɛlema. Schieffelin studied both dyadic and triadic interactions involving ɛlema although the latter occurred more frequently. In these triadic interactions, the mother encourages the child to fend for him/herself in a variety of situations, by having him/her repeat phrases that she provides. For example, she may use ɛlema to help the child gain information or compliance from another person. Children are taught to tease, shame, and threaten others under their mother's guidance. Mastery of these routines is considered important by the Kaluli if the child is to be able to direct the behavior of other people. In Schieffelin's observations, as in Ochs', we see that the very patterns of interaction

in which languge itself is learned may be subject to intercultural variabilities.

In sum, two major themes can be seen to emerge from studies bearing on the patterning of teaching and learning in Pacific Islands children. First, the usual means of learning is observation and imitation of a model. Second, the operations learned are clearly related to the final goal. To these themes must be added the strong peer orientation and affiliation of these children, resulting in tendencies to cooperation and mutuality in task performance. The contrast with many of the teaching practices commonly employed in classrooms is a sharp one. If, for example, instruction is largely verbally directing and often conducted in the form of teacher questioning of individual students, or if tasks are presented out of the context of the overall performance goal (e.g., the learning of shape names or phoneme-grapheme correspondences), confusion for students and frustration for teachers can be expected.

Conclusions

Studies of a number of different groups of Pacific Islands children support the conclusion that there are important differences between the norms of these children's own cultures and norms commonly represented in the classrooms of the Euro-Amerian schools that they attend. The magnitude of these differences greatly reduces the probability that these children will benefit much from schooling conducted according to norms which do not take the culture of the children into account. The array of results reviewed should leave little doubt that there are distinctive ways in which many Pacific Islands children learn to communicate and participate, to teach and to learn, which implicate adjustments in patterns of teacher-pupil interaction and classroom organization. Much of the work cited was conducted with Hawaiian children who grow up as speakers of Hawaiian Creole English; but parallel findings were also reported by

investigators working with populations of children, such as those in Samoa, whose native language is completely unrelated to the language of instruction.

The differences that we have discussed between Pacific Islands cultures and school practice are marked, and at times reflect diametrically opposed sets of values, beliefs and patterns of behavior. What troubles us is the danger of assuming that methods of teaching academic skills which work well with mainstream American (or French or English) children should necessarily work with Pacific Islands children. In many cases, such a procedure is tantamount to condemning the children to academic failure. Fortunately, it seems this dismal picture can be changed by choosing educational options which allow teachers to capitalize on the children's existing skills, be they in observing models, in working cooperatively, or in talking story.

Here the experience of KERI in its development of the KEEP program is encouraging. KEEP has been very successful with Polynesian-Hawaiian children who ordinarily do very poorly in school. There seems to be no reason that similarly successful programs cannot be developed for use with other Pacific Islands groups who currently do not prosper educationally. Indeed, for other Polynesians, effective programs might look much like KEEP. For non-Polynesian Pacific Islanders, there may be important differences in what constitutes appropriate classroom practice; and certainly, in all cases, program development should always be subjected to careful attention and empirical testing. The similarity of the problems that occur in different areas of the Pacific, however, encourage the thought that there may be at least some common solutions. For Asian-Americans and other minority populations culturally more distant from Polynesians, the usefulness of extrapolation from KEEP can, at this point, only be speculated upon (Jordan, 1981b), and the importance of empirical work is even greater. But even here the Hawaii work may provide a mode for an effective approach to program development (Tharp, 1981).

It should be encouraging to those struggling with the problems of bilingual/bicultural education that the Hawaii experience indicates that effective solutions can be developed by working from the existing repertoire of sound educational practice (Sloat, 1981). As has been argued elsewhere (Jordan, 1981a; 1981b), what is needed mostly is selection and extension, rather than invention. Although for individual teachers the KEEP program may call for the practice of techniques or combinations of techniques that they, as individuals, have not been accustomed to using, nothing in the program goes beyond what teachers, as a group, already know how to do. What is called for is a distinctive selection and combination from that library of teaching expertise already developed by educational science to tailor programs to fit the skills and abilities which their own cultural background endows to each population of children.

It has been our intent to emphasize the importance of incorporating the bicultural perspective in bilingual education. It seems particularly important in order to foster academic success in bilingual classrooms to shape a classroom culture which employs interactional means congruent with the communicative interactions of the children's homes, and to recognize that the relevant issues in communication include, but are not confined to, issues of language per se. Rather, they involve subtle and even not-consciously-recognized patterns of interaction which are extremely important, nevertheless, in terms of the responses they engender. We would urge, therefore, that the development of bilingual education provide for systematic study and careful attention to cultural patterns of communicative interaction. This is especially important in the case of Asian-American and Pacific Islands populations, where these issues may be overlooked because, in many cases, language differences are not dramatic. In such cases it is easy to underestimate the magnitude of communication issues. As we hope we have demonstrated, however, attention to norms of communicative

interaction is necessary for mutually comprehensible exchanges between teachers and pupils and vital to effective education.

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Glossary Terms

Polynesia: That group of Pacific Islands occupying an area roughly triangular in shape, with the Hawaiian Islands at the northern tip, Eastern Island at the easternmost tip, and New Zealand at the southwestern tip, and including Tahiti (Society Islands), and Samoa. The pre-European inhabitants of these islands, the Polynesians, spoke closely related languages and shared many cultural features.

Melanesia: The Pacific Islands in the area from New Guinea to New Caledonia and east to Fiji, including the Solomon Islands.

Micronesia: The Pacific Islands in the northwest part of the Pacific Ocean: the Marianas, Palau, the Carolines, the Marshalls, and the Gilbert Islands.

Hawaiian Creole English (or Hawaiian Islands Dialect): A dialect of English, spoken as a first language by many Hawaii residents and by most Hawaiians.

Mainstream culture: The culture of the majority group or of the politically and economically dominant group.

Australian Aborigines: The indigenous people occupying the Australian subcontinent prior to the European immigration.